

The Old Paths

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"The Religious Celebration Of Easter"

Jarrod Jacobs

cussions are necessary because we live in a culture that does not respect God's silence!

Today is the day that many people will don their "Sunday best" and gather with their families to worship. Some folks have waited all year for this occasion, and now it has come — "Easter". This is the one day in the year when many folks will celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord.

While many make their plans to attend with "family", is this what God wanted? Much like the question of whether or not we are choosing the church of God's choice, we might also ask if we are worshipping God in a manner that pleases Him if we remember the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ only once a year? What saith the Scripture?

To help in the study of this thought and theme, I have included a question that was sent to me via e-mail that relates to the religious celebration of "Easter", and my answer from God's word. Please read this section carefully, and then we will make some applications at the end of the article.

Letter To Me:

"I hold that Easter is a pagan holiday ... and that it falls under the heading of 'learn not the way of the heathen (Jer. 10:2). Most of my family sees Easter as okay. 'We use it to glorify God and it doesn't matter that it has origins and similarities to a pagan feast.' I can't seem to get a concise an-

swer on how they justify what I see as a compromise with wickedness. Can you offer one?'"

My Answer:

Hello,

I am sorry to have to disappoint you, but I cannot offer you a concise answer as to why your family wants to compromise with error. I do not believe in the religious celebration of Easter, either.

The Lord told us to remember His death, burial, and resurrection as we partake of the Lord's Supper and worship Him in spirit and in truth (Matt. 26:26-28; I Cor. 11:23-29; Jn. 4:24). This is to be done every first day of the week, and not merely once-a-year (Acts 20:7, 2:42).

If we wish to glorify God, then we need to glorify Him in the way that He instructs (Jn. 4:24), and not merely in a manner that we like (Matt. 15:8-9). Religious Easter celebrations, sunrise services, and the like are the invention of men and not the will of God.

Applications

Why do we have to have discussions like this? We have these discussions because people have sought to have "religious" celebrations (such as "Easter", "Christ's birthday", etc.) when in reality God never provided for such things in Scripture! In other words, these dis-

Yes, God has spoken concerning the remembrance and honoring of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. He declares that such memorial takes place when Christians partake of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-28; I Cor. 11:23-29). The bread and fruit of the vine reminds us of Christ's body and blood that was sacrificed so that we might be free from sin. Further, He has revealed that such observance is to be done, not yearly or monthly, but weekly — every first day of the week! We know this because the disciples in the first century remembered the Lord's death on a weekly basis (Acts 2:42, 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; etc.).

In addition to this, let us note that we are reminded of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection when one obeys the gospel of Christ and is baptized (Rom. 6:3-5, 16-18)! Just as Christ died, was buried and arose the third day, so also this one who is dead in sin is baptized (buried) in water for the remission of sins, and then rises to "*walk in newness of life*"! Such obedience from the heart is following the "*pattern of teaching*" left by Christ!

In contrast, the religious "Easter" celebration that is so common in the world had its beginning with men and not with God. God was silent concerning such celebrations, and His silence prohibits action (Deut. 29:29; Heb. 7:14)! Yet, the world wishes to do it anyway! Thus, the reason why I answered the man the way I did. It is because the Bible's emphasis of the Lord's death is far different from man's emphasis! Friends, let us determine to follow God and respect the silence of the Scripture!

Listen To The Sons Of This World

John R. Gibson
(www.pepperroadchurch.org)

Did Jesus commend dishonesty? Some have mistakenly reached that conclusion when they read the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1-13, but read the parable again carefully. Jesus did not commend the man for being a poor steward or for cheating his master; instead, He urged His disciples to note the way the man assessed the situation and took action to make certain he did not have to beg or resort to digging. And in His commendation of this man's quick thinking the Lord made an observation that I want to make the basis of this brief article: *"For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light"* (Luke 16:8).

I will come back to the thought of Luke 16:8 later, but before doing that I want us to be reminded of some Scriptural principles that should shape the way we dress.

We are to be a holy people. *"Be holy, for I am holy."* (I Pet. 1:13-17)

We are to *"flee sexual immorality."* (I Cor. 6:18)

We are not to engage in lewd, lustful, lascivious or licentious conduct. *"Let us walk properly... not in lewdness and lust...."* (Rom. 13:13, 14; II Cor. 12:20, 21)

We must avoid putting a stumbling block before others. *"For whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned*

in the depths of the sea." (Matt. 18:6, 7; 1 Cor. 8:9; 10:31-33)

We are charged with being an influence for good (salt and light) in a world that is corrupt and filled with darkness. *"Children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."* (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15, 16)

What does all of this have to do with the parable of the unjust steward? Simply this, the sons of this world know full well the power and provocative nature of indecent dress and continually exploit it. Why does the swimsuit issue of Sports Illustrated sell more than any other issue during the year? Why is every product imaginable sold by a man or woman wearing clothing that leaves little to the imagination either through its briefness, sheeriness or clinginess? Why does Hollywood so often feature characters in clothing that no one would ever describe as modest? Is it possible that the sons of this world in the business of publishing magazines, selling products through advertising, and producing entertainment know something the sons of light are either ignorant of or willing to disregard?

The sons of this world use terms such as sexy, alluring, provocative, daring, etc. to describe fashions many "sons (or should I say daughters?) of light" seem all too willing to don, but should our clothing really be described by such terms? Would it not be better for our clothing to be described as modest and proper for those professing godliness (1 Timothy 2:8-10)? In a world filled with immorality and lust we cannot always prevent evil men and women from thinking evil thoughts, but we can make the choice to dress ourselves and our children in clothing that is not designed to stir passions of lust.

Before you leave the house, ask yourself or another family member the following questions:

- ♦ Is this too short?
- ♦ Is it cut too low?
- ♦ Is it too sheer?
- ♦ Is it too tight?
- ♦ Is it too brief?
- ♦ Is it possible to sit down and still retain my modesty?

And before you answer, stop and ask yourself what the shrewd sons of this world might say.

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Preacher/Editor: Jarrod Jacobs

Phone: (270) 589-4167